

bishops there present affirmed that "the maintenance of the dignity and sanctity of marriage lies at the root of social purity, and therefore of the safety and sacredness of the family and the home. The foundation of its holy security and honour is the precept of our LORD, 'What GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' We utter our most earnest words of warning against the lightness with which the lifelong vow of marriage is often taken; against the looseness with which those who enter into this estate often regard its obligations; and against the frequency and facility of recourse to the Courts of Law for the dissolution of this most solemn bond." (*Encyclical Letter*, Lambeth Conference, 1897, p. 15.)

In the Lambeth Conference of 1908, at which no less than two hundred and forty-two Bishops were assembled, the Committee, which was appointed to report on questions connected with Marriage, spoke with absolute plainness with regard to those who are divorced and marry again:—"For the formation of a clean public opinion, and for its practical outcome in the refusal to be in social relations with adulterers and adulteresses (i.e., divorced persons who are remarried), the Committee would most earnestly appeal to clean-living women in all the many

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ranks and grades of life. Pure women are the great human power for good in this cause, and not in this cause only. They can apply a punishment which will soon prove to be remedial in its effect; they can refuse to have social relations with adulteress or adulterer. If they will be brave in this vital matter, the Committee are clearly of opinion that the flood of evil can be stemmed and turned." (*Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1908, pp. 140, 141.*)

(4) THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE WAS INSTITUTED

Another thing of the utmost importance is that those who are going to be married should carefully consider the purposes for which marriage was instituted by GOD. It is only when husband and wife are faithful to these purposes that they can look for GOD'S blessing on their married life. They are set forth in the Marriage Service under three heads:—

1. *“Marriage was ordained for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the LORD, and to the praise of His holy Name.”*

This, then, is the first and most sacred purpose of marriage, the perpetuation and increase of the human race. “The true wealth of a nation,” says Mr. Ruskin, “lies in producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures.” “There is no wealth but life. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings.” This is true, because it is in accord-

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ance with the purpose of GOD, Who when He blessed our first parents laid upon them this command—"to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." This command has never been withdrawn. One of the gravest and most serious signs of decadence in our own day lies in the fact that in a continually increasing number, married people are evading or frustrating this first and most holy purpose of marriage. There is a perfectly legitimate self-restraint which may be exercised for many right reasons; but there are also practices morally wrong, to which S. Paul significantly attaches the epithet of "unfruitful," and with which he warns us that we are to have no fellowship. (*Eph. v. 11.*) If the first and sacred purpose of marriage is unnaturally prevented, such acts must bring on the individual and on the nation a sure and terrible punishment. Doctors are again and again declaring the wickedness as well as the seriously injurious physical results of such practices, both to the man and the woman; while history proclaims with no uncertain voice the fate of that nation which tolerates the crowning crime of race suicide.

2. *"Marriage was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of*

continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of CHRIST'S Body."

The second purpose of marriage is the maintenance of purity. There is GOD'S law of purity for the single, and there is also GOD'S law of purity for the married. Those who are married need to remember this, and to bear in mind that a mere sensual and unrestrained use of marriage is contrary to GOD'S law, both spiritual and physical, and is a violation of true purity.

3. *"Marriage was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."*

This opens up thoughts of wonderful tenderness, unselfishness, and love. "Marriage," says S. Paul, "is a great mystery, because therein is signified the union betwixt CHRIST and His Church." So close is the union of husband and wife, that they are indeed not two but one flesh; so wonderful is this mystery of married love, that it signifies the love of CHRIST for His Bride the Church. But such a union and such love as this, so full of the deepest mystery, can obviously only be realized when, on the part of both

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husband and wife, there is a real sense of the great sacredness of the married life, and a real effort after unselfishness and self-discipline. Husband and wife, if they are to know the wonderful happiness of married life, must remember how much discipline it will involve for each of them. They must remember that the two lives which have been hitherto lived separately have now in marriage to be harmonized. There will be differences of opinion, differences of temperament and of taste, differences of interests ; for each will bring to the other his and her own life, with its special capacities and characteristics. It would not be good that it should be otherwise, for personality is one of the most sacred of all things. The two individualities must be maintained, but they must be harmonized. Where there are differences of opinion they must be held without friction ; where there is divergence of taste, it must be without selfishness ; where there are differences of interests they must not be allowed to break the fellowship of the common life.

“ Mutual society, help, and comfort.” It is the call to the husband to forget himself, and to live and think for his wife ; it is the call to the wife to live for her husband. In such self-forgetfulness, in such unselfishness, in

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such merging of the life of each in the life and interests of the other, love grows deeper and stronger. It is purified and uplifted, or rather it is more and more felt to be the love of GOD which, coming down from Him, and meeting the response of love in the heart of each, binds both to Himself, and in Him to one another.

(5) THE SOURCES OF HAPPINESS IN MARRIED LIFE

Faithfulness to the threefold purpose of marriage is the first and greatest guarantee of the continued happiness of married life. This, in the presence of the manifold temptations of life, and especially of our own time, is no easy task, and one which can indeed only be accomplished by the help of the grace of GOD. The old paths of prayer and worship, Communion, and study of the Bible, are still, whatever the modern world may say, the paths of holiness and peace and happiness. Many a marriage which has begun most happily, has sunk into what is commonplace and dull, and often into worse, just because fellowship with GOD has been broken or forgotten. Happy are the husband and wife to whom religion is a great reality, and who pray together, who kneel side by side at GOD'S altar, and whose Sundays are kept as days of holy and happy intercourse and peace.

On a lower scale, and yet of very great importance to the happiness of married life, is the maintenance of those courtesies and

tokens of thoughtfulness and love which marked the days of courtship. A man should be more, not less, courteous and considerate towards his wife than towards other women. That man has no true sense of manliness and no true perception of the beauty of married love, who thinks that when he is married his courting days are over, and that it is the duty of his wife to minister to all his wants; nor is that woman wise who, in the impulse of wifely devotion, imagines that she is acting the part of a true wife by unceasingly waiting upon her husband. He was a wise man who, a few weeks after his marriage, spoke thus to his wife:—"My dear, it is all very well just now, when you have little to occupy your time, that you should wait upon me so sweetly, but it is not wise. In the first place, I shall in all probability grow selfish and exacting, and expect you to continue your care, even if you have no time or strength. Then, as time goes on, and you are more and more burdened, you will be over-taxed by the loving tasks you have imposed on yourself, and I shall be blind to see it, just as I have noticed so many husbands are. It seems to me we had better begin on the right basis—I waiting on you, caring for you, and looking after my own

belongings. It will take me no longer to hang up my coat and hat than before I was married. My mother taught me to get out my own clean clothes and to pack my own valise, so it will be no hardship to continue it. I appreciate all the attentions your love has prompted, but believe me, dear, I am wiser in this than you.”¹

The writer who quoted these words bears witness to the happiness of that home, and tells how in later years the children learnt from the husband that it was a real joy to “save mother trouble.”

But, on the other hand, the wife, while she refuses to spoil her husband by taking up those personal duties which belong to him, will be careful to show her appreciation of his thoughtfulness of her, and always to give a courteous acknowledgement of the service he renders to her. She will watch for those moments when he is tired or troubled, and, however busy she may be, will be ready to give him such tender sympathy and help that he will see that his care for her has not made her selfish, but has quickened her love towards him.

To the husband, all through the years of married life, his wife should be his queen, and

¹ Dr. M. Allen Wood, *The Ideal Married Life*.

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